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Excluded Organization

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May 17, 1977

THE MINISTER

RSO:RJKelly RA 1009

Terrorist Estimates - Buenos Aires

Recently, RSO met with members of the Argentine Intelligence Service who stated that recent operations against the ERP have been highly successful. Last Thursday, May 12, Security Services raided a premise in Lujan which was the main printing and publishing headquarters for Estrella Roja, the ERP monthly magazine. Sources stated that ERPs propaganda arm is highly centralized and they felt this raid and the subsequent confiscation of printing presses and publishing paraphernalia will be a crippling blow to the ERP on a nationwide basis.

11 Sources also stated that since last Thursday they had captured between 30-40 mid-ranking members of the ERP and that at present the ERP has almost no combat strength. However, they are still active politically and, along with other terrorist elements, have been trying to infiltrate the labor and student movements. In this connection, they have one 3-man cell in the GM factory in Buenos Aires.

The April ERP publication lists major accomplishments over the past month which include the bomb attack in the apartment building of the South African Ambassador and the killing of Navy Captain Luis Marfa Baradi.

Sources stated that the Montoneros have also suffered major personnel losses over the past year and their previous organizational strength of almost 5,000 members has been reduced to between 1,000 and 1,200, of which only 300-400 can be considered combatants. The Montoneros are having difficulty in obtaining recruits and in conducting any large operations. They have not successfully conducted a major operation against the police or military in one year. The cells are about 5-men in strength and have very little communication with other cells and have had to devise indirect means of communication, including renting phones, putting notices in newspapers and using third parties who have no direct relationship to the cells concerned. Although this has protected the cells, it has rendered them ineffective in operating in a cohesive manner.

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radical control center -
Army 7th Corps
- orchestrate raids
free zones

80F178
20/185

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

have to supply
no more g
life
no local discipline

AF
250-ERP
14-10-77
1/2-10-77

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Sources stated that the Montoneros are still attempting to attract youth, particularly students, into their ranks but with the exception of the universities in La Plata, they have not been very successful. La Plata has numerous universities that accept out-of-country students and remains the center for Montonero activities within the universities of Argentina. Sources stated that most Montonero members come from a background which includes broken families, social problems and history of not getting along well with authorities or parents and religious heterodoxy. Surveys have indicated there is a very high percentage of Jewish members of the Montoneros who have broken with the Jewish faith. Sources stated this was even more evident in 1972-73 in the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR) movement when more than 70% of this membership was Jewish. These persons were among the most intelligent of the young Argentine community and also the most politically dedicated. In almost all instances, their parents and members of their family are completely unaware of their terrorist activities.

Sources stated that the Montoneros have abandoned their recently public posture of being Marxists as this has failed to attract sufficient Argentine support. Instead they are once again posturing themselves as a Peronist based movement. Sources stated that in spite of this they have numerous desertions from the Montoneros over the past month. The Montoneros have responded by acts of summary justice against persons whom they suspect of deserting the movement.

Sources stated that the Montonero security and intelligence system once was very strong but is rapidly coming apart. However, the chief of Montonero intelligence has not been apprehended and the intelligence arm still functions, but no where near as effectively as it once did. It remains almost inaccessible to the regular cells. Sources stated that the Montonero sympathizers still permeate every aspect of Argentine life, including the government services, and provide information on Argentine government officials and, have on occasion provided information on US government officials. Sources stated they had reviewed a list of US government persons and support bio data that had been put together by the Montoneros approximately 1 to 1 1/2 years ago. Sources

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stated they had not seen any recent updating of the list concerning USG officials. Sources stated that the Montoneros have been particularly interested in U.S. intelligence agencies and had done a study on the NSA. However, they doubted that the Montoneros would initiate acts of violence against members of the U.S. diplomatic community due to President Carter's position on human rights which is favorable to their situation. Sources felt it is still necessary to remain alert and provide an adequate level of security.

Recently, terrorists have used the Ford Falcon station wagon in attacks on targets. The technique is to fold down the rear seat and sandbag the rear of the wagon to protect it against small arms fire. The assailant lies in the back of the station wagon, down between the sandbags. When the station wagon is in proper position for the attack, the driver pushes the button to automatically lower the rear window and the terrorist then raises his body slightly and fires with an automatic weapon out through the open tailgate window. The terrorist is almost completely protected from return fire and has the element of surprise in initiating the attack. This system was recently used on a member of the Federal Security Service who was killed. This tactic also may be used in conjunction with a diversionary attack against convoy support vehicles.

Sources stated that the main focus of the Montonero activity now is in the political international arena and local labor scene. The main area of concentration is from Campana, just northeast of Buenos Aires to Villa Constitución, which is southeast of Rosario. This is known as the industrial chain. There are numerous large factories along that line. Montoneros are covertly moving into the factories with the hope of either stimulating a conflict between labor and management or labor and the Argentine government, or taking advantage of any unfavorable labor relation situations that occur. In this regard, they also may take direct action against major business executives.

Sources stated that the Bolivian terrorist support elements that had been in Argentina have been eliminated and the Chilean support is almost eliminated. Cuba continues to support terrorist activities by transmitting funds through diplomatic pouch from Cuba to Argentina for use by terrorist elements.

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*Weapons shortage
target police for
weapons.*

*Still source
of income:
* financing
operation*

*Serious infiltration
penetration in business
7 for police - killed
last week - 4 for 10
eliminate Coordination
Federal, all but 50
proven -*

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Source stated that attacks against terrorist elements by combined security forces are well coordinated. To the best of their knowledge, there are no free-lance para-police units operating. Efforts are centralized and well directed. This is why they have recently had so much success. There may be a few persons who have taken action against individuals suspected of terrorist activities but this would be a rare exception. For instance, the Triple-A people for the most part are in jail, not as political criminals, but as common criminals.

Sources stated that the military tribunals are continuing to try terrorists and that it is very unlikely that terrorists will be turned over to civilian courts in the near future. Sources stated the combatant strength of the terrorists should be eliminated within one year but the ideological subversion will probably last longer.

NOT FOR FOREIGN DISSEMINATION, INCLUDING LIAISON GROUPS

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